

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims replaces all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of claims

Claim 1: (previously presented) A method for identifying mail pieces for special processing based upon predetermined characteristics, the method comprising the steps of:

- a) storing a plurality of predetermined profiles, each of the predetermined profiles having at least one profile image characteristic;
- b) obtaining at least one mail piece image characteristic associated with an image of a mail piece;
- c) retrieving one of the predetermined profiles that has not yet been used in a comparison;
- d) comparing the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic present in the one of the predetermined profiles;
- e) identifying the mail piece for special processing, if the at least one profile image characteristic substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic; and
- f) repeating steps c) through e) for another one of the plurality of predetermined profiles, if the at least one profile image characteristic does not substantially match the at least one mail piece image characteristic.

Claim 2: (cancelled)

Claim 3: (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of comparing the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic occurs during real-time processing.

Claim 4: (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the step of comparing the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic occurs during offline processing.

Claim 5: (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic and the at least one profile image characteristic are selected from the group consisting of barcodes, address styles, address resolution, envelope size, initiating processing and distribution center, addressee, postage characteristics, markings, and handwriting characteristics.

Claim 6: (previously presented) A system enabling identification of mail pieces based upon predetermined characteristics, the system comprising:

means for obtaining an image of a mail piece;

means for obtaining at least one mail piece image characteristic associated with the image of the mail piece;

at least one processor;

at least one computer readable memory having:

(a) a database storing data for each one of a plurality of predetermined profiles, the data comprising:

an identifier,

at least one profile image characteristic, and,

an action identifier; and,

(b) computer readable code embodied in the at least one computer readable memory, the computer readable code capable of causing the at least one processor to:

retrieve the data for one of the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,

compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one mail piece image characteristic present in the

retrieved data substantially matches the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data.

Claim 7: (previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein the computer readable code is further capable of causing the at least one processor to:

retrieve the data corresponding to another predetermined profile from the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,

compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece.

Claim 8: (original) The system of claim 6 further comprising:

means for communicating with a network.

Claim 9: (original) The system of claim 8 further comprising:

a remote server capable of receiving and sending data.

Claim 10: (previously presented) The system of claim 7 wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic and the at least one profile image characteristic are selected from the group consisting of barcodes, address styles, address resolution, envelope size, initiating processing and distribution center, addressee, postage characteristics, markings, and handwriting characteristics.

Claim 11: (previously presented) A system enabling identification of mail pieces based upon predetermined characteristics, the system comprising:

means for obtaining an image of a mail piece;

means for obtaining at least one mail piece image characteristic associated with the image of the mail piece;

at least one processor;

a first memory for storing data for access by a process executed by at least one processor, said memory comprising:

 a database storing data for each one of a plurality of predetermined profiles, the data comprising:

- an identifier,
- at least one profile image characteristic, and,
- an action identifier;

at least one second memory having computer readable code embodied therein, the computer readable code capable of causing the at least one processor to:

 retrieve the data for one of the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,
 compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

 identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one mail piece image characteristic present in the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data.

Claim 12: (previously presented) The system of claim 11 wherein the computer readable code is further capable of causing the at least one processor to:

 retrieve the data corresponding to another predetermined profile from the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,

 compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

 identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece.

Claim 13: (original) The system of claim 11 further comprising:
 means for communicating with a network.

Claim 14: (original) The system of claim 13 further comprising:

a remote server capable of receiving and sending data.

Claim 15: (previously presented) The system of claim 11 wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic and the at least one profile image characteristic are selected from the group consisting of barcodes, address styles, address resolution, envelope size, initiating processing and distribution center, addressee, postage characteristics, markings, and handwriting characteristics.

Claim 16: (previously presented) The system of claim 14 wherein the remote server includes:

at least one third memory having computer readable code embodied therein, the computer readable code capable of causing the at least one processor to:

retrieve the data for one of the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,

compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic associated with the image of the mail piece to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one mail piece image characteristic present in the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data.

Claim 17: (previously presented) The system of claim 16 wherein the computer readable code is further capable of causing the at least one processor to:

retrieve the data corresponding to another predetermined profile from the plurality of predetermined profiles from the database,

compare the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece to the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data,

identify the mail piece as requiring the action identified by the action identifier from the retrieved data, if the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece.

Claim 18: (previously presented) The system of claim 14 further comprising:

another memory for storing data for access by a process executed by the remote server, said memory including a database.

Claim 19: (previously presented) The method of claim 1 wherein the mail piece comprises a hand addressed mail piece;

wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic comprises at least one handwriting characteristic; and,

wherein said one of the predetermined profiles comprises at least one distinguishing handwriting characteristic for handwriting penned by one individual.

Claim 20: (previously presented) The system of claim 6 wherein the mail piece comprises a hand addressed mail piece;

wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic comprises at least one handwriting characteristic; and,

wherein said one of the predetermined profiles comprises at least one distinguishing handwriting characteristic for handwriting penned by one individual.

Claim 21: (previously presented) The system of claim 11 wherein the mail piece comprises a hand addressed mail piece;

wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic comprises at least one handwriting characteristic; and,

wherein said one of the predetermined profiles comprises at least one distinguishing handwriting characteristic for handwriting penned by one individual.

Claim 22: (previously presented) A system for processing mail items and identifying mail items for special processing comprising:

a transport sub-system capable of transporting a mail item;

an imaging sub-system capable of obtaining an image of the mail piece;

means for storing a plurality of predetermined profiles, each of the predetermined profiles having at least one profile image characteristic;

means for obtaining at least one mail piece image characteristic associated with an image of the mail piece;

means for retrieving the plurality of predetermined profiles;

means for successively comparing the at least one mail piece image characteristic to the at least one profile image characteristic present in any of the plurality of predetermined profiles until a match is found, if any;

means for identifying the mail piece for special processing, if the at least one profile image characteristic present in one of the plurality predetermined profiles substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece.

Claim 23: (previously presented) The system of claim 22 further comprising:

means for identifying the mail piece as requiring an action identified by an action identifier from the retrieved other of the predetermined profiles, if the at least one profile image characteristic from the retrieved data substantially matches the at least one mail piece image characteristic for the image of the mail piece.

Claim 24: (previously presented) The system of claim 22 wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic and the at least one profile image characteristic are selected from the group consisting of barcodes, address styles, address resolution, envelope size, initiating processing and distribution center, addressee, postage characteristics, markings, and handwriting characteristics.

Claim 25: (original) The system of claim 22 further comprising:

means for communicating with a network.

Claim 26: (original) The system of claim 25 further comprising:

a remote server capable of receiving and sending data.

Claim 27: (previously presented) The system of claim 22 wherein the mail piece comprises a hand addressed mail piece;

wherein the at least one mail piece image characteristic comprises at least one handwriting characteristic; and,

wherein said one of the predetermined profiles comprises at least one distinguishing handwriting characteristic for handwriting penned by one individual.

Claim 28: (previously presented) The system of claim 8 wherein said database is downloaded from the network.

Claim 29: (previously presented) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:
modifying a result record associated with the image of the mail piece if the mail piece is flagged for the special processing;

transmitting the image to a remote site for manual image inspection according to the result record; and

classifying the mail piece as innocuous or suspicious based on the manual image inspection.

Claim 30: (currently amended) The method of claim 1 further comprising the steps of:

- g) archiving the mail image having at least one archived mail piece image characteristic;
- h) updating the plurality of predetermined profiles by creating at least one new ~~or-one updated~~ predetermined profile having at least one new profile image characteristic;
- i) retrieving one of the new ~~or-updated~~ predetermined profiles that has not yet been used in the comparison;
- j) comparing the at least one archived mail piece image characteristic to the at least one new profile image characteristic present in the one new ~~or-one updated~~ predetermined profile;
- l) identifying the archived mail piece for the special processing, if the at least one new profile image characteristic substantially matches the at least one archived mail piece image characteristic; and
- m) repeating steps (i) through (l) for another one of the plurality of new ~~or-updated~~ predetermined profiles, if the at least one new profile image characteristic does not substantially match the at least one archived mail piece image characteristic.